

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LENDING 01598 01 OF 02 301558Z
ACTION EUR-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 SS-15 /019 W
-----013816 301600Z /43
P 301541Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4355

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LENINGRAD 01598

FOR GARRISON FROM BUCHANAN

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OGEN
SUBJECT: OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

1. DO SVIDANIYA, CONGRATULATIONS AND MANY THANKS FOR
YOUR SUPERB BACKING OF OUR OPERATIONS. LOOKING FORWARD
TO LENINGRAD OR MOSCOW REUNION THIS SUMMER.

2. IMMUNITIES. AT STAFF MEETING IN MOSCOW LAST WEEK, THE
QUESTION OF IMMUNITIES FOR PEOPLE ON OFFICIAL PASSPORTS
WAS DISCUSSED AT MY INITIATIVE (FOR OBVIOUS CURRENT
REASONS) AND REFERENCE WAS MADE TO THE EXCHANGE OF NOTES
WITH SOVIETS COVERING WHITE LIST PERSONNEL. SINCE WE
COULD NOT READILY FIND COPY OF THIS EXCHANGE, AND THERE
WAS SOME INDECISION REGARDING THE EXTENT TO WHICH STAFF
MEMBERS ON OFFICIAL PASSPORTS IN CONSULATES WOULD BE
COVERED BY THIS EXCHANGE, WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING
COPY OF EXCHANGE AND ANALYSIS COMPARING IMMUNITIES EX-
TENDED TO DIPLOMATS, TO WHITE LIST MEMBERS AND TO THEIR
RESPECTIVE DEPENDENTS IN CONSULAR POSTS IN USSR. OBVIOUSLY,
ANY COMMENTS ON PRACTICE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN
CALIFORNIA AND NEW YORK WOULD ALSO BE APPRECIATED, IF
RELEVANT INCIDENTS ARE AVAILABLE.

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3. CUSTOMS. IN CASE CRUNCH SHOULD DEVELOP OVER OUTGOING
SHIPMENT OF HOUSEHOLD GOODS, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF ACERBIC
MEETING WHICH OUR ADMIN OFF HAD LAST WEEK WITH HEAD OF
CUSTOMS SECTION HANDLING OUR OUTGOING HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS. WE
WERE ACCUSED OF FAILING TO OBEY REGULATIONS AND TOLD THAT
EACH OFFICER OR STAFF MEMBER SHOULD HAVE SUBMITTED (A)

DETAILED INVENTORY IN RUSSIAN OF EFFECTS (GENERAL PACKING LIST IS INSUFFICIENT); (B) DETAILED LIST OF ALL ITEMS OF VALUE (HE EXTENDED THIS TO COVER WHATEVER THEY MIGHT CONSIDER OF POSSIBLE VALUE, INCLUDING OF COURSE MODERN PAINTINGS); (C) LISTS UPDATING THE INVENTORY AS ITEMS MAY BE IMPORTED FROM ABROAD. CUSTOMS DIRECTOR NOTED THAT HE HAD AUTHORITY TO OPEN HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND, IN FACT, WE KNOW HE HAS RECENTLY EXERCIZED THIS RIGHT IN CASE OF AT LEAST ONE FRG DIPLOMAT FROM WHOM HE TOOK SAMOVAR AND RUG - REFUSING TO RETURN THEM UNTIL HE WAS INFORMED HOW GERMANS PLANNED TO DISPOSE OF THEM.

4. I WAS INFORMED IN MOSCOW THAT ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE IS FOR EMBASSY TO SEND OVER GENERAL PACKING LIST PROVIDED BY THE SHIPPING COMPANY, IN ENGLISH, AND NOTHING MORE. WE DO NOT PROVIDE LIST OF VALUABLES OR UPDATE WHAT WE BRING INTO THE COUNTRY. THE SOVIETS ALSO KNOW THAT OUR RULE OF THUMB IS THAT NOTHING PRODUCED AFTER 1945 CAN BE AN ANTIQUE, SUBJECT TO EXPORT RULES. IN MY MEETING IN MOSCOW WITH M.I.D. COUNSELOR MIKOL'CHAK ON MAY 26 TO DISCUSS OUR PROBLEMS WITH UPIP, I EXPRESSED MY CONCERN OVER THE VEILED THREAT TO OPEN DIPLOMATIC HOUSEHOLD GOODS, SAID THAT I SAW NO REASON TO FOLLOW ANY OTHER PROCEDURES THAN THOSE LONG ESTABLISHED IN MOSCOW, AND THAT I, ACCORDINGLY, PLANNED TO SUBMIT OUR PACKING LIST AND NOTHING ELSE. I NOTED, IN PASSING, THAT U.S. CUSTOMS WOULD NOT BE DISCONFIDENTIAL

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INCLINED TO OPEN SOVIET DIPLOMATIC SHIPMENTS, IF SITUATION WARRANTED. MIKOL'CHAK NOTED THAT HE HAD HEARD ONLY MY SIDE OF STORY BUT THAT I WAS OVER-REACTING TO "MISCONDUCT" (IN ENGLISH) OF A CUSTOMS OFFICIAL. I EXPRESSED MY SATISFACTION AT HEARING ADMISSION THAT CUSTOMS OFFICIAL HAD EXCEEDED HIS AUTHORITY. (COMMENT: PRESUMABLY, MIKOL'CHAK WILL NOW LOOK INTO THIS INCIDENT (HE SAID HE HAD LOOKED INTO OUR EARLIER COMPLAINTS ON A TRIP TO LENINGRAD) AND HOPEFULLY TELL THE LOCAL OFFICIAL TO COOL IT. GIVEN A CERTAIN LOCAL AUTONOMY AND THE PERSONALITY OF THE CUSTOMS OFFICIAL IN PARTICULAR, WE ARE NOT ENTIRELY CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT WE ARE OUT OF THE WOODS, AND MAY NOT NEED A GENTLE REMINDER FROM U.S. CUSTOMS TO RETURN THE SITUATION TO NORMAL.)

5. IN GENERAL, MY MEETING WITH MIKOL'CHAK WENT AS ANTICIPATED. HE DISCLAIMED SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF MY ACCUSATIONS, PROCEEDED TO CHALLENGE ME (INCORRECTLY) ON THE ISSUE OF PERSONS REMOVED FROM THE CONSULATE'S EMPLOY, ACCUSED ME OF BEING EMOTIONAL AND MAKING THREATS (I ALLUDED AS YOU SUGGESTED TO OUR ABILITY TO REVIEW SAN FRANCISCO STAFFING IF OUR OWN NEEDS WERE NOT SATISFIED), INSISTED THERE WAS NO

DISCRIMINATION BEING EXERCIZED AGAINST US, AND THAT UPIP
IS DOING ITS BEST TO BE RESPONSIVE TO OUR NEEDS.

6. SINCE LOCAL STAFF IS NOW PASSING AROUND THE WORD THAT
I AM BEING TOO TOUGH TO BE EFFECTIVE IN MY DEALINGS WITH
UPIP, AND WE NOTE A SUDDEN, SHOCKING DESIRE TO PLEASE ON
THE PART OF THAT ORGANIZATION, I AM HOPEFUL THAT WE HAVE
MADE OUR POINT, FOR THE TIME BEING. HAVING WRITTEN, TRANS-
LATED BUT NOT SENT A LETTER TO THE CITY GOVERNMENT (DULY
PASSED ON BY NOW), I WILL SHOW IT TO THE HEAD OF UPIP

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PAGE 01 LENDING 01598 02 OF 02 301600Z
ACTION EUR-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 SS-15 /019 W
-----013829 301601Z /43

P 301541Z MAY 78
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4356

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LENINGRAD 01598

TOMORROW AND SAY I HAVE SHOWN RESTRAINT IN NOT SENDING IT
AS A GESTURE OF MY INTEREST IN TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.
IT IS TOO BAD IT TAKES A SLEDGE HAMMER TO KILL A FLY IN
THIS COUNTRY, BUT IF IT WORKS, PERHAPS IT IS WORTH THE
EFFORT. BUCHANAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LENING01598
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780226-0070
Format: TEL
From: LENINGRAD
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978058/aaaaaglz.tel
Line Count: 152
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: de962aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2752941
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OFFICIAL-INFORMAL
TAGS: OGEN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/de962aa2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014